

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

**Arlington School District
Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process Report 2005-2006**

Team Members: Chris Sargent and Donna Huber, Education Specialists

Dates of On Site Visit: February 22, 2006

Date of Report: March 14, 2006

This report contains the results of the steering committee's self-assessment and the validation of the self-assessment by Special Education Programs. The report addresses six principles – General Supervision, Free Appropriate Public Education, Appropriate Evaluation, Procedural Safeguards, Individualized Education Program and Least Restrictive Environment. Each principle is rated based on the following scale:

Promising Practice	The district/agency exceeds this requirement through the implementation of innovative, high-quality programming and instructional practices.
Meets Requirements	The district/agency consistently meets this requirement.
Needs Improvement	The district/agency has met this requirement but has identified areas of weakness that left unaddressed may result in non-compliance.
Out of Compliance	The district/agency consistently does not meet this requirement.
Not applicable	In a small number of cases, the standard may not be applicable for your district/agency. If an item is not applicable, the steering committee should briefly explain why the item is NA. Example – no private schools within the district boundaries.

Principle 1 – General Supervision
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General supervision means the school district's administrative responsibilities to ensure federal and state regulations are implemented and a free appropriate public education is provided for each eligible child with a disability. The specific areas addressed in principle one are child find, referral procedures, children voluntarily enrolled by parents in private schools, students placed by the school district, improving results through performance goals and indicators (assessment, drop out, graduation), professional development, suspension and expulsion rates.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- B – District/Agency Instructional Staff Information
- C – Suspension and Expulsion Information
- D – Statewide Assessment Information
- E – Enrollment Information
- F – Placement Alternatives
- G – Disabling Conditions

- H – Exiting Information
- Parent Survey, referrals, publications of child find notices
- Comprehensive plan
- Yearly child find results

Promising practice

The Arlington K-12 staff participated in a Data Retreat which was conducted in November of 2002. The Data Retreat involved hands-on analysis of four lenses of data: student data, professional practices, programs and structures and parent and community involvement. Working collaboratively and reflectively the Arlington staff examined test data and classroom grades which enabled them to paint a picture of student achievement. They also correlated student achievement with school programs. Considerable time was devoted to analyzing the data and determining areas of strength and weakness. As strengths and weakness in academic achievement were discovered, staff began to explore professional development that had been provided to teachers in the district, as well as examine professional practices. Once the data had been gathered, staff discussed and recorded observations made concerning the data they had compiled, and formulated hypotheses concerning student achievement in the Arlington district. Goals were then articulated for the district and strategies were implemented to help achieve the goals.

The administration and instructional staff have continued to keep their data current. The fall of 2003 and the fall of 2004 saw a continuation of the process begun in 2002 with the newest data available being added to the compilation. During the summer of 2004 the district began mapping curriculum. All teachers started the process of mapping their individual content areas. K-12 language arts staff mapped all of their classes and the result was a K-12 vertical alignment of the district's language arts curriculum. Language arts teachers also participated in the year long process of up-dating and refining the language arts maps during the current school year.

In May of 2005, the district will begin work on a K-12 vertical alignment of mathematics curriculum. Non-mathematics teachers who began the process of mapping their individual courses during the previous summer will continue the process with the remainder of the classes that they teach. After this summer's work is completed, the Arlington District should have not only have a K-12 alignment of mathematics and language arts, but also a 7-12 alignment of the remaining content areas.

Meets requirements

The steering committee concluded student placed in a private school by the district are afforded all rights and services in accordance with requirements of IDEA. The school district adheres to the state guidelines for the reporting of students suspended, expelled, or dropped out.

Paraprofessionals attended an in-service in February and the Boys Town Training in August of 2004. Paraprofessionals are supervised by certified staff. Brainstorming is held regularly between certified staff and paraprofessionals to address student needs.

Validation Results

Promising practice

The monitoring team could not validate the data analysis or curriculum development as areas of promising practice. These processes are required to develop appropriate instructional services.

Through interview and a review of data, the integrated preschool program was determined to be a promising practice for the Arlington School District. The program is open to all 4 and 5 year old children and is held five days every two week for a half day. Parent response to the program has been very

positive based upon an 80 to 90 percent enrollment rate. Through interview, students who participate in the program display marked improvement in their readiness skills when entering kindergarten.

Meets requirements

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meeting requirement under general supervision as concluded by the steering committee.

Principle 2 – Free Appropriate Public Education

All eligible children with disabilities are entitled to a free appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment. The specific areas addressed in principle two are the provision of FAPE to children residing in group homes, foster homes, or institutions, making FAPE available when a child reaches his/her 3rd birthday and providing FAPE to eligible children with disabilities who have been suspended or expelled from school for more than 10 cumulative days.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- State Tables C,E,F,K, L, M, N
- Age at referral
- Number of students screened
- Personnel development education
- Preschool age
- School age
- Personnel training
- Budget information
- Comprehensive plan
- Surveys

Meets requirements

The steering committee concluded the school district provides FAPE for children birth through 21 as determined by their IFSP and IEP. The district follows state and federal regulations to ensure FAPE for all students.

Validation Results

Meets requirements

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meeting requirement under free appropriate public education as concluded by the steering committee.

Principle 3 – Appropriate Evaluation

A comprehensive evaluation is conducted by a team of knowledgeable staff, which also includes parental input. A valid and reliable evaluation will result in effective individualized education programs for eligible students. The specific areas addressed in principle three are written notice and consent for evaluation, evaluation procedures and instruments, eligibility determination, reevaluation and continuing eligibility.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- State tables G,H,I,J
- Teacher file reviews
- Surveys
- Comprehensive plan
- Parent Teacher report forms
- Initial referral

Meets requirements

The steering committee concluded the district provides the parents written notice five days prior to proposing or refusing to initiate or change the child's identification or evaluation. Parental consent is acquired prior to evaluation and transition evaluations are consistently administered for students 16 years old. The areas to be evaluated are determined by a "team" of people including the referring person, special education teacher, parent, school psychologist and administrator.

Written notice/consent is provided to parents five days prior to proposing or refusing to initiate or change the child's identification or evaluation. A multidisciplinary team report is available for all students with learning disabilities. Tests results are explained to parents and they are provided a copy of the evaluation reports. Reevaluations are completed on all eligible students to determine eligibility and determine student needs.

Out of compliance

The steering committee concluded all tests listed on the prior notice/consent are administered.

Validation Results

Meets requirements

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meeting requirements under appropriate evaluation as concluded by the steering committee.

The team also validated that all tests listed on the prior notice/consent are being administered in 100% of the student files reviewed.

Principle 4 – Procedural Safeguards

Parents of children with disabilities have certain rights available. The school makes parents aware of these rights and makes sure they are understood. The specific areas addressed in principle four are adult student/transfer of rights, content of rights, consent, written notice, confidentiality and access to records, independent educational evaluation (IEE), complaint procedures, and due process hearings.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- State Table L and M
- Teacher file reviews
- Surveys
- Comprehensive plan
- Parental Right document

- Consent and prior notice forms
- Public awareness information
- FERPA disclosure

Meets requirements

The steering committee concluded parents are notified of their rights. Consent is obtained for all special education placements. The district has not had a complaint or a request for a due process hearing. The district's policies provide all parents the opportunity to inspect and review all educational records concerning their child in the provision of a free and appropriate public education.

The school district has procedures for the selection, training and administrative considerations regarding the appointment of a surrogate parent for a child with disabilities. A list of individuals who would serve as a surrogate parent if needed is available in the district.

Validation Results

Meets requirements

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meeting requirement under procedural safeguards as concluded by the steering committee.

Principle 5 – Individualized Education Program

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a written document for a child with a disability that is developed, reviewed and revised by the IEP team, which includes the parent. The specific areas addressed in principle five are IEP team, IEP content, transition components for secondary IEPs, annual reviews, transition from early intervention program, and IEP related issues.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Parent surveys
- Student surveys
- Comprehensive plan
- Teacher file reviews
- Personnel training
- Budget information

Meets requirements

The steering committee concluded IEPs are reviewed annually on or before the date of the previous IEP. The district comprehensive procedures address the transition of children to the Part B program.

IEPs documented the beginning date of service and services begin as soon as possible after the IEP is developed. District IEPs contain all required content including transition services. The present levels of performance linked to functional assessment, contain specific student's strengths, weakness and the student's involvement in the general curriculum. Teachers receive copies of IEP's after the IEP meeting and prior to the beginning of school.

Out of compliance

The steering committee concluded representatives from other agencies were not invited to participate in the IEP meetings for students of transition age.

Validation Results

Meets requirements

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meeting requirement under individual education program as concluded by the steering committee.

Agency representatives are currently being invited to attend meetings for students of transition age, therefore, this steering committee issue is validated as meeting requirements.

Needs improvement

Through a review of student records, the monitoring team recommends that when the IEP team justifies placement away from a students typical peer group, the instructional needs of the student be consistently included in the justification statement.

Through a review of student records the monitoring team recommends that when the IEP team discusses how the disability affects the student's progress or involvement in the general curriculum, the documentation specifically addressed the impact of the disability that is seen in the general education setting.

Principle 6 – Least Restrictive Environment

After the IEP is developed or reviewed, the IEP team must decide where the IEP services are to be provided. Consideration begins in the general education classroom for school age students. The specific areas addressed in principle six are placement decisions, consent for initial placement, least restrictive environment procedures, preschool children, and LRE related issues.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- State tables E,G,I,J,F and N
- File reviews
- Surveys

Meets requirements

The steering committee concluded the Arlington School District addressed the least restrictive environment (LRE) for all students. They have an excellent inclusion program for students with the aid of teachers and staff to help students succeed in the regular education classroom in all grades.

Validation Results

Promising Practice

Through interview, data review and classroom observation the monitoring team concluded the districts inclusion program is an area of promising practice. The districts student participation rate in the regular classroom with modifications has averages 85 to 88 percent compared to the state average of 54 to 56 percent. General education staff develops and implements the modifications necessary for their students to be successful in the regular classroom. Teachers attributed the success of the program to administrative support and the involvement of the special education staff involvement in a variety of aspects of the districts curriculum. Through observation, classroom supports were in place for successful inclusion practices. The inclusion appeared to be academically meaningful and productive for all 22 students in the classroom. The supports were provided when need and faded when not needed. Supports

were provided to any student who needed assistance and were not intrusive or disruptive to the teacher's presentation.

Meets requirements

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meeting requirement under least restrictive environment as concluded by the steering committee.